

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-05 EB-07 AF-06 EA-07

EUR-12 NEA-10 /117 W

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R 122100Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8921

INFO USUN NEW YORK 305

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0638

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, TD, RQ, CU

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICAN ISSUE AT UN COMMITTEE OF 24

REF: STATE 049329

1. DURING TWO-DAY VISIT HERE TO DISCUSS ENHANCED ECONOMIC/TRADE CONTACTS WITH TRINIDAD, PUERTO RICAN SECRETARY OF STATE ALBORS RAISED QUESTION OF CUBAN INITIATIVE ON PUERTO RICO IN SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS AND WITH MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS JOSEPH MARCH 11. ALBORS EMPHASIZED THAT THE CUBAN LINE ON PUERTO RICO WAS PURE AND SIMPLE FABRICATION WHICH IS OF CONSIDERABLE ANNOYANCE TO THE COMMONWEALTH. ALBORS EMPHASIZED STRONGLY THAT PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE SUPPORTED CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES, BUT HE DID NOT PRESS THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LEADERS FOR A SPECIFIC COMMITMENT AT THIS TIME.

2. REACTION OF BOTH TRINIDADIAN OFFICIALS WAS, AS
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EXPECTED, NONCOMMITTAL. MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LISTENED CAREFULLY TO ALBORS' POINTS, BUT AVOIDED MAKING ANY COMMENT. WHEN REPRESENTATION WAS REPEATED LATER IN DAY TO PRIME MINISTER (WITH JOSEPH PRESENT), WILLIAMS REPLIED IN FRINEDLY VEIN THAT HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO AND NEEDED NO EDUCATION ON THAT SUBJECT FROM CUBANS OR ANYONE ELSE. HOWEVER, WILLIAMS VOLUNTEERED NO COMMENTS REGARDING WHAT GOTT MIGHT DO IN COMMITTEE OF 24, CHOOSING INSTEAD TO LAUNCH INTO LIVELY EXPOSITION OF CASTRO'S PERFIDIES WHICH EMBASSY IS REPORTING SEPARATELY.

3. WE ARE GIVING OUR CLOSEST ATTENTION TO SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL. AT THIS POINT, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WILLIAMS AND HIS ADVISORS DO INDEED HAVE A FULL APPRECIATION OF THE FACTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AND PUERTO RICO, AND THAT NO FURTHER "EDUCATING" EFFORTS NEED BE UNDERTAKEN HERE, IN FACT WOULD PROBABLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

4. THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE THAT THE GOTT WILL VOTE AGAINST US IN THE COMMITTEE. THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE IT OFF ITS TRADITIONAL ABSTENTION POSTURE, TOWARD A POSITION OF POSITIVE SUPPORT. WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT THAT THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, BUT NEITHER DO WE COMPLETELY RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY. IN THIS REGARD IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE GOTT GAVE THE VISITING PUERTO RICAN TEAM AN EXTREMELY CORDIAL WELCOME AND SEEMS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN FOLLOWING UP ON POSSIBILITIES OF CONCRETE ECONOMIC AND TRADE POSSIBILITIES WITH THE COMMONWEALTH. IT IS ALSO EVIDENT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN CASTRO AND WILLIAMS ARE, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, AT ROCK BOTTOM.
FAY

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